

Minutes of Barnwell County School District Board of Trustees
Special-Called Community Meeting
Tuesday, June 11, 2024
(5214 Reynolds Road; Blackville, South Carolina 29817)

Board Members Present: Chairperson Terry Richardson, Ronnie Brown, Becky Huggins, SGM Abraham Sexton, Dr. Andy Sandifer

I. Opening Business

A. Call to Order, Reflection, Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, FOI Notice

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. SGM Abraham Sexton led the Reflection and the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Chair Richardson confirmed the media was notified.

B. Approval of Agenda – Chair Terry Richardson

A motion was made by Dr. Andy Sandifer to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. Prior to the final approval of the agenda, Ronnie Brown asked for an amendment to the agenda to have public participation after the presentation and then chairman comments after public participation. The agenda was unanimously approved.

II. Old Business

Dr. Stapleton shared the Barnwell County School District video with the audience. *She stated that the videos explains why we do what we do. I am grateful that we have a larger crowd tonight to hear about some of the work we're doing. I am very grateful to work alongside this school board, but you have been tasked with a monumental challenge as we come together. You have been tasked with some different things than other consolidated districts. I am going to do a brief overview of the many meetings that we have had.*

A. Review of Barnwell County School District Facility Plan

Dr. Stapleton provided the following overview of the Facility Plan.

- \$105 million in Savannah River Site Settlement Funding outlined in the Appropriations Act signed by Governor Henry McMaster- Construction of Consolidated High School and Career Center
- From the beginning, the Board has been tasked with creating a transition plan to have one consolidated high school and career center.
- \$10 million from grant funding for the career center was written for programming

and/or renovations.

- Superintendent Ellen Weaver, at the most recent board work session, committed \$5 million dollars to the high school/career center project.

Chair Richardson stated that Senator Brad Hutto deserves some credit for that extra funding, as well. Dr. Stapleton acknowledged Senator Hutto in the audience and thanked him.

Facility Plan- Phase 1

Phase 1- Completion of an In-depth Facility Study

- Work on Phase 1 began August 2, 2023, immediately as the Transition Board began their work toward consolidation of Barnwell County Consolidated School District, Barnwell School District 45, and Barnwell County Career Center.
- Throughout the Fall of 2023, the board was updated by M.B. Kahn and SSOE regarding the facility study being thoroughly conducted.
- During Phase 1, final approval was awarded for the FEMA Gym/Safe Room from the Federal Government. Working with Barnwell County Emergency Management on this project, the Safe Room was planned and designed to host emergency personnel for life-safety purposes, including evacuees, and provide protection for county residents during severe weather. The Safe Room had a dual purpose to be used as a new gymnasium. This is a dual purpose and a unique project. They want to use this as a model because it is the first one that FEMA has approved on the east coast.

FEMA Safehouse and Gymnasium Update

- Total Funding for both Phases of the Project:
Total Project Cost- \$10,806,513.64
Federal Share of \$8,104,885.23
Local Share of \$2,701,628.41 (previously saved and does not come out of current funding for facilities)
- Our 2-year extension request was granted and the POP will end November 9, 2025.
- Dr. Stapleton presented what a monolithic dome looked like and stated that it is constructed to sustain high winds, and she shared the Schematic Design of the Gymnasium/Safe Room that was approved by the state's Office of School Facilities.

Facility Plan- Phase 1- November 2023

- Board addressed rumors about facilities for the new district but reiterated that there have been no decisions made regarding facilities at this time. Any facility decisions would be made by the Board of Trustees as a collective group during a board meeting that is appropriately advertised.

Key Takeaways from the Facility Study in Fall 2023:

1. There was work needed across the schools within the county to make updates, renovations, etc.
2. There was more work needed than funding available, and the Board would need to prioritize the greatest needs.
3. In meetings with the state representatives and in reviewing the legislation, the funding from the Appropriations Acts was earmarked for specific projects.

Facility Plan- Phase II

Steps for Phase II of the Facility Plan were approved at the January 2024 Board meeting.

Phase II- Approval of Facility Plan for Barnwell County School District

1. Release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Architectural/Engineering Services and a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Construction Management At-Risk Services with a deadline for receiving proposal responses within two weeks.
2. A district committee will conduct the bid opening and narrow down proposals to "shortlist of firms" for interviews. The board members will choose from these firms in securing services.
3. Once selected, the district board and leadership will work with the chosen firms to develop specific plans and a timeline for a new career center and consolidated high school. The district will seek community input with this plan. We are here for an informational meeting so the public can hear the same information that you have heard.
4. A plan will also be developed for renovating a K-8 space in both Williston and Blackville. We are not at this step yet, and that's why step 3 is so important so we will know how much we will have to do those things. SSOE and H.G. Reynolds will be helping us with this step as well.

Formation of Historic Committees

- We currently have a chair for each board- appointed committee.
- Barnwell High School- Ms. Kelly Shealy

- Blackville-Hilda High School- Dr. Andy Sandifer
- Williston-Elko High School- Mr. Ronnie Brown
- Barnwell County High School- Mr. Mike Beasley (this committee will work on the colors, logo, and mascot)

At the June meeting, the committee lists will be finalized, and meetings can be scheduled.

Purpose of School Committees: to archive the history of each high school, collect memorabilia that will be archived and kept for display in a museum or the new high school in the future, help consider ways to honor the legacy of the schools, etc.

Enrollment Totals- (most recent)

Barnwell High School	574	
Blackville-Hilda High School	154	
Williston-Elko High School	190	
Total Projected Enrollment for a Barnwell County High School		918

This number will fluctuate because you will have grade levels graduating, and new grade levels coming in. When you look at that, it's more around a total of 950.

Takeaways from Facility Work Session with SSOE and H.G. Reynolds

Work Session Presentation: May 23, 2024

- The architect/engineer and construction management at risk services team were thorough in the information they provided the Board of Trustees. (Scope of Work for Phase II) If we ask a question, they come back with an answer immediately, and we have standing meetings every other week.
- We were grateful that Senator Hutto and Representative Hosey were able to join and provide their input and support with the plans moving forward.
- The Board's next step was to have an informational meeting for the community to hear the same information regarding the options. That is why this meeting tonight is happening – to allow everyone to hear the proposals from the firms the Board has been working with the past few months.

III. New Business

A. Presentation of Facility Plan Options- SSOE and H.G. Reynolds

- Tim Williams with SSOE and Jeffery Reynolds with H.G. Reynolds began their informational presentations.
- Tim Williams with SSOE began his presentation by saying that K-12 is something that his firm is passionate about. This is probably the most important thing that has happened and is going to happen in Barnwell County for a long time. I would like to thank the board, Dr. Stapleton, and you the community for allowing SSOE and H. G. Reynolds to be here to serve you. Our job is to bring information to the transition board so that they can bring information to you as a community.

- The agenda's discussion included:

Programs

Conceptual Site Plan Studies for 4 different concepts

Cost Projections

Options Comparison

- Overview
- Concerns
- Ranking
- Recommendation

Concept 1

- New CATE Focused High School to be constructed on a new site TBD

This includes programs you currently have a programs you want to have. We have an alternate option with a 500 seat auditorium. If funding is not initially available, you could always plan to add it in the future.

- Target Sq. Footage - 225,000
- Total: Sq. Footage - 281,892
56,892 over
- 18-25 Million over GMP
- \$138,778,805.00 24-28 Months

Concept 2

- **New CATE Focused High School to be constructed on Barnwell High School Site**
 - Target Sq. Footage - 225,000
 - Total Sq. Footage - 253,542
28,542 over
 - \$127,422 under GMP
 - \$108,537,559.00 24-28 Months

Concept 3

- **New Cate Focused High School- Renovate Existing Buildings**
 - New Buildings - 155,122 Sq. footage
 - Renovations - 98,000 Sq. footage
 - \$103,276,106.00 36-40 Months

Concept 4

- **New CATE Focused High School on Barnwell High School Site, renovate existing gym (only)**
 - New High School - 233,879 Sq. footage
 - Renovations - 19,543 Sq. footage
 - \$106,596,209.00 24-28 Months

- **Future Plans**
Open-Air Agriculture Arena and Support Services with Greenhouse and Farm Acreage
 - New Building - 67,088 Sq. footage
 - \$13,578,085.00 12-14 Months

- Options Comparison Overview: Concerns- Ranking

Concept 1: New CATE Focused High School on New Site TBD

- 281,892 Sq. footage (New)
Total GMP: \$119,276,384
Total Cost: \$138,778,805
Most Expensive Option
All New Construction - 24-28 Month Construction
Move Student One Time
Efficient Building Design
Land Search/Purchase
6- Month OSF Approval

Concept 2: New CATE Focused High School on Barnwell High School Site

- 253,542 Sq. footage (New)
Total GMP: \$94,872,578
Total Cost \$108,537,559
\$30,241,246 less than Concept 1
All New Construction- 24-28 Month Construction
Move students One Time
Efficient Building Design

Concept 3: New CATE Focused High School On Barnwell High School Site

- 155,122 Sq. footage (New)
98,000 Sq. footage (Existing-Renovation)
Total GMP: \$89,922,951
Total Cost: \$103,276,106
\$35,502,699 less than Concept 1
\$5,261,453 less than Concept 2
New/Renovation Construction
36-40 Month Construction
Move Students Multiple Times
Inefficient Building Design

Concept 4: New CATE Focused High School on Barnwell High School Site

- 233,879 Sq. footage
- 19,543 Sq. footage (Existing Gym Renovation)
- Total GMP: \$93,046,384
- Total Cost: \$106,596,209
- \$32,128,596 less than Concept 1
- \$1,941,350 less than Concept 2
- New/Renovation Construction
- 24-28 Month Construction
- Move Students Multiple Times
- Inefficient Building Design

Jeffrey Reynolds from H.G. Reynolds thanked everyone for allowing his company to help with this project. He stated that his company built Williston-Elko High School, Barnwell Elementary School, and renovations at Guinyard-Butler Middle School.

Jeffrey Reynolds presented information on the cost of the four concepts:

Concept 1: New CATE Focused High School on a new site. Site would need 60 acres of land plus another 25 acres for agriculture. We would need a site in the county with somewhere in the area of 85 acres which would slow us down. The square footage on that is 282,000 and the budget set for that would be \$138,778,000.00. Construction time would be 24-28 months.

Concept 2: CATE Focused High School on existing Barnwell High School site. Land purchase would not be required, and we could take advantage of the new FEMA Gym. The square footage is 254,000 and the budget set would be \$108,537,000. Construction time would be 24-28 months.

Concept 3: CATE Focused High School on existing Barnwell High School site with renovating some of the existing buildings. The square footage is 155,000, and the budget set is \$103,276,000. The difference in saving the buildings is about \$5 million dollars. We're not sure that's the best use of your funds, but that's how the numbers come out.

Concept 4: CATE Focused High School on existing Barnwell High School site. The square footage 233,000. The budget is set at \$106,596,000. That would be a \$2 million dollar saving if we keep the gym.

The other thing we're looking at is the open area Agricultural arena, support services, with greenhouse and farm acreage. The square footage on that is 67,000, and the budget is \$13,578,000. Construction time would be between 12-14 months.

We will do whatever the board wants us to do and directs us to do. If time and money is not a concern, Concept 1 would be the number 1 option. Concept 2 would be the second best option because you're saving \$30 million dollars because of the FEMA gym, and you already own the property. The next in ranking would be Concept 4, and in ranking Concept 3 would rank number 4. We would not recommend Concept 3. Our recommendation is Concept 2 because you will save time and money. I thank you for your attention, and I thank the board for all you do.

Chair Richardson said thank you for your presentations, and there's a couple of things that I would like to say. Thank you to Senator Hutto for who you have appointed here to work with. Ronnie Brown, who has been working here for over 18 years for the people of Barnwell County. Abraham Sexton has been with the school district for 16 years and worked for the school district, Becky Huggins whose family has been deeply involved in schools their whole lives, and she's served over 7 years, Dr. Andy Sandifer has been superintendent and principal. I'm the only one that does not know anything about education. I am blessed because of who has been appointed to work with this board. Schools gotten tremendous amount of assistance from a lot of different people. We have spent a lot of days looking at all this material. Senator Hutto and Representative Hosey has been involved. They have been working statewide with a lot of different counties. Dr. Lee Andria who has been superintendent 2 different places, she is now assigned to Barnwell by the Department of Education and working tirelessly for our benefit. We are very appreciative to Senator Hutto and Representative Hosey. We received \$105 million from the Savannah River Site Settlement, and that's more than any surrounding counties. We had 7 high schools in Barnwell County at one time. We have now consolidated and down to 3, and we have got to have a larger facility to help provide these children with the challenges they're going to meet in today's economy that we are all having to face. Barnwell School District 45 set aside over \$2 million dollars for the FEMA gym, and I appreciate their service, and the Barnwell County School Boards. Thank you to Dr. Stapleton, she has brought some expertise to our board. We are blessed to have the best superintendent in the

state of South Carolina. She has worked hard and pulled people together. We as a board have been committed to help children in the entire county, and in my view I don't see anything other than an attempt to be fair to every single student. The students are getting along fine, and I would hope that the adults would show good leadership and make this work in the way that it should work. Our whole goal is to educate the children.

Public Participation

Mrs. Ferlecia Cuthbertson spoke on the topic of Proposed Consolidation Model/ Consolidated HS.

Ms. Cheryl Long spoke on the topic of New Consolidated School Facility.

Chair Richardson thanked the speakers for their remarks.

IV. Executive Session

Chair Richardson asked for a motion to go in to Executive Session to discuss Employment of Employee A, B, C, and D.

Motion made by Becky Huggins to go into Executive Session to discuss Employment of Employee A, B, C, and D at 7:05pm and seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chair Richardson asked for a motion to come out of Executive Session. Motion made by SGM Abraham Sexton to come out of Executive Session at 7:26pm and seconded by Ronnie Brown. The motion was approved unanimously.

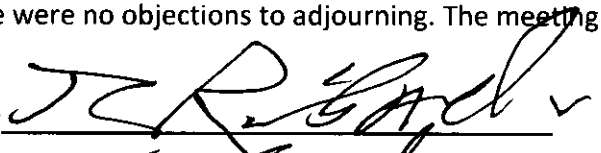
Chair Richardson asked for a motion to approve employment of Employee A, B, C, and D.

Motion made by Becky Huggins to approve employment of Employee A, B, C, and D and seconded by Ronnie Brown. The motion was approved unanimously.

V. Adjournment

A. Meeting Adjournment

Becky Huggins made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ronnie Brown. There were no objections to adjourning. The meeting adjourned at 7:28pm.

Chair 
Clerk 